

# SCOUTING PARTY TOOK CONEY ISLAND IN THE RAIN



## This Advance Body Charged the Redoubts of Luna Park in Interest of Army Which Will Attack in Force May 23.

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

**I**T RAINED. Huge swirls of eddying water, coaxed into fury by the wild wind sweeping over the ocean, beat down, tempest-like, upon the desolate shore. Leftly, artfully, seeking out with an uncanny skill each unprotected cranny or corner, the descending deluge—

Well, anyhow, it rained. And say! Did you ever set out for Coney Island at 11 o'clock in the morning of a rainy Tuesday, eighteen days before the opening of the season? Because, of all times to set out for Coney Island, 11 o'clock in the morning of a rainy Tuesday, eighteen days before the opening of the season, possesses a minimum of advantages.

In the first place, the accommodations for attaining Coney Island at 11 o'clock in the morning of a rainy Tuesday, eighteen days before the opening of the season, are anything but ample and commodious. This is asserted boldly, and without fear of successful contradiction or the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company.

Assuming that you, the gentle reader, should embark for Coney Island at 11 o'clock in the morning of a rainy Tuesday, eighteen days before the opening of the season, and assuming, further, that you apprehend immediately a Brighton Beach train—which is an assumption not predicated on fact—you will in due course of time, or thereabouts, arrive at a station known as King's Highway.

### THAT LITTLE MATTER OF "CAR AHEAD."

So far so good. You are comfortably ensconced in a window seat in the rear car of the train, and you defy any one to move you until you come to Coney, and perhaps not then. As the train stops at King's Highway you glance out of the window and note the rain, so feelingly described in paragraph two. And you're lazy, and you don't care who knows it.

You may even gaze over the surrounding country and wonder vaguely why they labelled it King's Highway, and what was he king of, and what had he done to deserve it. And then, just as you settle back a little further, and close your eyes—

"Car ahead!" cries the conductor. Well, you murmur drowsily to yourself, suppose there is? From where you sit you can see by opening one eye that there is a car ahead—several of them, in fact. You knew that when you got on and if that conductor thinks he's giving you any information—

"Car ahead!"

Confound it, what's the matter with the fellow? Then you sit up with a jolt and observe that there are no other passengers in your car, and that the idea that the conductor wished to convey was that you should proceed to the

car immediately in front of the one you are occupying.

For a minute you think you'll sit right where you are and be cut off with the car and stay there, but then you take another look at King's Highway through the moisture-beaded window and change your mind. Mumbling a few lines from some standard hymn, you rise and press ahead, endeavoring to negotiate swiftly the open space between the two cars and thus keep moderately dry.

If this you are only partially successful, because, although you manage to dodge the drops descending directly from heaven, the roof of the forward car lets go a young deluge that it had been saving for you, and it catches you midway between the back of your neck and your rear collar button.

It is with some difficulty that you find words to fit this occasion, because there are not many and they are in constant demand. Your feelings recover a trifle when you see that the window seat of the forward car is empty and yawning for you, and you sink into it gratefully. But in a minute the conductor stands beside you and taps you on the shoulder.

"Car ahead!" he says. Aha! you've got him there!

"This is the car ahead," you tell him, with dignity.

"Nix! Car ahead!"

"This is the car ahead!" You are beginning to get mad.

"This is this car. The car ahead is ahead. How could this be?"

**THE INTELLECTUAL SURRENDERS TO BRUTE FORCE.**

Oh, well. Rather than argue with the fellow you will give in. Besides, it is plain that he doesn't know what he is talking about and you would only be wasting your good logic on him. So you get up again and prepare to run the rainy gantlet to the car still further ahead.

This time, however, you are wiser. No cowardly water spout is going to roll off a roof when you aren't looking and catch you unawares again. Not much. So you leap across the opening with one eye warily on the roof, and are rewarded by getting the cloudburst squarely in that eye.

Presumably your troubles are over by that time, but when you get into the car you find the corner seats and most of the others have been preempted by policemen, Brooklyn Rapid Transit employees returning from work or stout women with market baskets.

You take what is left, if it is, the rear cars are cut off, and the car ahead, dripping water from every point, goes on to Coney with its nondescript cargo. Slightly different, the scene, from 2 o'clock in the afternoon of a blazing Sunday in July. But you must remember that the time is 11 o'clock

in the morning of a rainy Tuesday, eighteen days before the opening of the season.

The destination of this yarn, lest we seem to be getting lost, is Coney's own Luna Park. This is to relate a few of the divers and nefarious schemes that you will find in Luna if you journey out there this summer—as who will not? Matters in and around Luna were in a slightly bedraggled and unfinished state last Tuesday, but when the season opens at 5 p. m. on May 23, 1914—accept it as truth, prithee, that the one and only Luna will be bigger, greater, finer, brighter (yes, and funnier) than ever before in the history of the nation.

The first thing one notices about Luna at present is that the great 100-foot entrance is more or less neatly boarded up. Across the boards are a few well chosen words announcing that the park will open on May 23. To the right of the fence is a doorway marked "Positively No Admittance," so the stranger takes the hint and enters.

The visitor, if he desires to be shown around and can prove that he ought to be, inquires for "Lew" Hart, chief shower-around, and is informed that Mr. Hart is in New York. You must have passed him on the way, sir, tall gentleman, with a—well, be that as it may, Mr. Hart was in New York last Tuesday. Mr. Jones, in charge of something or other, so informed the visitors, but, said he, he would call Balk.

"Whaddye mean call Balk?" asked the artist. "Think you're 'numpire'?"

"Mr. Balk is Mr. Hart's assistant," responded Mr. Jones, quite as though he had to make that explanation a dozen times a day to as many potential jokers.

### MR. BALK—ONE OF A SERIES OF INTRODUCTIONS.

Mr. Balk arrived, wrapped in skins, for it must be remembered that it is raining during the entire plot of this story. Mr. Balk agreed to find the office of Oscar C. Journey, which is in the middle of the ocean—that is, the park—and it must be said for him that he did so.

A pause here, while Mr. Oscar C. Journey is being introduced. Mr. Journey is the president of the Luna Amusement Company, which does not matter, and he is the inventor of most of the diabolical contrivances within

the park, which matters a lot. He is a young man to be at the head of so vast an enterprise as Luna Park, but he probably doesn't know it.

He is above average height, good looking, of light complexion, and carries a twinkle in each eye. He came from Baltimore and was at Luna part of last season as assistant to President Nelson. When Mr. Nelson stepped out Mr. Journey stepped in. He has worked every minute of the winter perfecting plans for a Greater Luna, and there is no doubt whatever that the Luna that he has evolved will be the cleverest and most entertaining yet seen. Probably that has been said about every Luna since Lunas began, but wait until you see this one.

The first thing that Mr. Journey just naturally bubbled over about was the Castles' Summer House. Yes, you've guessed it—the Castles have invaded Coney.

### THE CASTLES WILL BE THERE! ONLY FANCY!!

"Really," rippled Mr. Journey, "this will be strictly a high-class affair. We have contracts with the Castles giving us the exclusive right to the use of their name on Coney Island, and Miss Corbin, their assistant, will be in charge here all summer. Mr. and Mrs. Castle, undoubtedly, will also be out occasionally. The Castles' Summer House is right over the German Village."

"Right over the German Village?" queried the artist.

"Right over the German Village," repeated Mr. Journey.

"Over the German Village?" again asked the artist, stressing the first word.

"Over the German Village," reiterated Mr. Journey.

"Castles in the air," murmured the artist.

The Castle House has been awarded the vantage point of the park, and will be magnificent when finished. The scheme of the ballroom decorations will be a tangle of green, arched overhead, and through it all will be twined rambling roses—beautiful red roses. At the entrance to the ballroom will be two Italian fountains, and when the orchestra and both fountains are playing simultaneously it will be a splendid, different spectacle.

Beyond the fountains, if one gazes out that way, one will behold the mountains of an adjacent scenic spectacle, but it will be by strolling out on to the first balcony that one will obtain the paramount view. All Luna will be exposed to the gaze, with the shimmering lake, if it happens to be shimmering, immediately below.

**MILD, AESTHETIC TEA ON THE VERANDA.**

Tea will be served on the veranda—merely that, and nothing more. For be it known that there will permeate the Castles' Summer House an atmosphere of aestheticism, which same is wholly incompatible with beer in brown bottles.

The modern dances, whatever they happen to be at the time Luna opens, will be taught if any one can be found who doesn't know them. The ballroom floor is 110 by 45, so the Castle Housers are prepared for anything from the Giraffe Gyration to the Diplodocus Dip.

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Speaking of music and things—medals, for instance—John Philip Sousa, heard and band, will grace the free music pavilion for a month or so in the middle of the season. There has been

therefor a check that it is just as well for you to lose. You will visit the Beauty Shop, where, among other things, you may be manicured. This is not compulsory, because it is doubtful if you will fancy the manicuring instruments when you behold them. On the table will be two boxes for tips—one for money tips, the other for finger tips.

There will be a musical floor, which will discourse sweet music if you walk upon it properly. Nor forget the goldfish, because if you catch one of them you may take it home with you—or eat it there. They will be hard to catch, for they are trained goldfish. Training them was no sinecure, as you may readily imagine. The man who did it was the famous "Mike" Mullane, who once taught half a dozen Lynnhaven oysters to open their shells and say "Mamma."

The W. C. T. U. should indorse the Crazy Village's Temperance Saloon, which is bound to cure thousands during the summer. Snakes, did you say? Miles of 'em. And there will be a room devoted to moving pictures—pictures, seemingly stationary on the walls, that move.

The library, probably, is the supreme effort of the Crazy Village. The secret of it is too good to give away, and, besides, would require entirely too involved an explanation. But take care, if you see a book bearing a particularly inviting title, that you touch it not. And under no circumstances get into an argument with the librarian, because she weighs 594 pounds. Before leaving the library you should take a peek into the cage in the corner and inspect the bookworms and the Welsh rabbits.

**SLIPPERY TONGUE TO HAVE ADDED ATTRACTIONS.**

Leaving the Crazy Village, although the foregoing are but a tithe of its attractions, there is the Old Shoe, down the slippery tongue of which only the kiddies were permitted to slide last season. That the Old Shoe is being reconstructed to accommodate adults will be good news to those who like to stand at the lower extremity of such places.

While children are the subject, behold Noah's Ark! It's something new and the idea of Oscar Journey, who admits he put the ark in the park. It is just for the youngsters, who will be given toys inside the ark by old Noah himself. It will be lighted by arc lights, it goes without saying, and the architect—but enough.

breed that Noah took with him, persuade them to bark, catch the bark with a phonograph and rapidly transfer it to the outside of the ark before it turned sour. It was a delicate operation.

**THE TROUBLE BEGAN WITH A CARELESS WORKMAN.**

Coming back to that vexing problem of the roof, the trouble started with the discovery that a careless workman had mislaid the print describing it.

"Well," said Mr. Cleary, "that's inconvenient, but not insurmountable. We'll just take a look at the real ark and see what kind of roof it has."

"I approve of that idea entirely," acquiesced Mr. Journey, "but, if I may be allowed to introduce so trivial an objection, where is the real ark?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know?" inquired Mr. Cleary.

"That is exactly my idea," rejoined Mr. Journey.

"The Erie Railroad," said Mr. Cleary, "is using it for a depot in Paterson, N. J."

"Oh," said Mr. Journey.

So Mr. Journey and a corps of workmen spent three days going to Paterson and back, only to discover that the Paterson depot is not the ark, but Cain's cabin. Then the roof problem assumed a really serious aspect, for Messrs. Journey and Cleary will leave the roof off entirely rather than put on a flat one, when it should be peaked, or use oak instead of cedar.

**CONCLUSIONS RENDERED INEVITABLE BY HISTORY.**

For a while they thought maybe the ark had no roof, but then one of them remembered that history records the weather as decidedly inclement for forty days or so of the ark's tenancy, and that the ark must have had a roof, or everybody would have been drowned. That is where the matter stands today, and any one with some authentic information on the subject will be given the glad hand, not to say the merry mitt.

The popular chute-the-chutes will, of course, be doing business at the old stand, the only change being that the great towers that flanked each side of the bottom of the chute have been moved to the top. Moving them required six weeks and was no child's job, all of the principles of pyramid construction having been employed in the operation.

It will be a more spacious lagoon into which the cars will chute—one

made to appear more spacious, at any rate, by the fact that the platform spanning it have been removed. The free vaudeville that formerly happened on these platforms has been given a place in another part of the park.

Captain Sorcho will have his Great Deep Sea Divers—the adjectives are the captain's—on hand and ready to perform all varieties of plain and fancy deep sea diving to order. The captain was among those present Tuesday, but he said that he had not brought the divers along because it was too wet for them. Also, said he, there were other and divers reasons.

"Before and After" has been sub-

Continued on eleventh

an entirely new bandstand constructed in celebration thereof, for the engagement of John Philip marks a new and radical departure for Luna.

Next door to the Castle House is the Crazy Village, and here Mr. Journey has excelled himself. Originally the Crazy Village idea was Fred Thompson's, but Oscar Journey has improved on it immeasurably. There still is the Cave of the Winds, and any number of those terrible things that seem about to fall on you, and a dozen places where you are inveigled into sitting down, only to find yourself precipitated to the floor. And there are new expedients.

For instance, you will deposit your worries at the entrance, receiving

The point is that the ark is a replica of the original, is complete except for the roof, and that the question of that roof is what is keeping Oscar Journey and Edward Cleary, his assistant, awake nights. At least, if anything were keeping them awake that would probably be it.

This imitation ark is so like the original that neither John W. Shem nor the two doves could tell it from the real one if they came back. It has been built from the original blueprints. It is covered, incidentally, with natural bark, and they couldn't use just any old bark that came along. Their aim, remember, was to make this ark a duplicate of the original, and to this end they had to find two dogs of the

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